



# Statistical Report

Spring 2019

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## Headline Statistics

- This year in the UK, nearly **40,000**<sup>1</sup> children and young people will enter the care system. That's **109** every day.
- There are currently around **95,000** children in the UK who are classified as looked-after away from home<sup>2</sup>. An increase of **3%** from the previous year.<sup>3</sup>
- More than **65,000** children live with almost **55,000** foster families across the UK.<sup>4</sup>
- The UK urgently needs **8,100** more foster families to meet the need.<sup>5</sup>
- At 30 September 2018, there were **2730** children waiting for adoption in England. **41%** of these had been waiting **eighteen months or more**.<sup>6</sup>

### Care-leavers

Around **9,000** young people in England age out of the care system every year<sup>7</sup>:

Only **6%** of care leavers aged 19-21 go on to higher education<sup>8</sup>.

Care experienced young people in England<sup>9</sup>:



Make up **25%** of the homeless population



Make up **almost half** of men under 21 in contact with the criminal justice



Are **three times** more likely to be not in education, employment or training

## England: Executive Summary

- There are **75,000** looked after children.<sup>1</sup>
- The number of children starting to be looked after (32,050) has fallen by **3%** from 2017 (32,940).<sup>2</sup>
- **56%** of looked after children are male and **44%** are female.<sup>3</sup>
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children make up **6%** of the looked after children population.<sup>4</sup>
- **11%** of children ceased to be looked with a special guardianship order.<sup>5</sup>

### Fostering

- **73%** of looked after children are in foster placements.<sup>6</sup>
- It is estimated that a further **6,800** foster families need to be recruited over the next year.<sup>7</sup>
- Over the past year, **10%** of fostered children have had **three or more** placements.<sup>8</sup>

### Adoption

- **3,820** children ceased to be looked after due to adoption, a **13%** decrease from the previous year.<sup>9</sup>
- The average age of adoption is **3 years and 3 months**.<sup>10</sup>
- The number of looked after children with a placement order for adoption has fallen by **44%** since 2014.<sup>11</sup>

### Reason for becoming looked after<sup>12</sup>:

- 63%** Abuse or neglect
- 15%** Family dysfunction
- 8%** Family being in acute stress
- 6%** Absent parenting
- 8%** Other

### Ethnicity of looked after children<sup>13</sup>:

- 75%** White
- 9%** Mixed
- 7%** Black or black British
- 5%** Asian or Asian British
- 3%** Other ethnic groups, including Chinese

### Care Leavers and care-experienced young people

- **Nearly half** of all young men (21 and under) in custody have experience of the care system.<sup>14</sup>
- **One third** of care leavers become homeless within the first two years of leaving care<sup>15</sup> and **25%** of homeless people are care-experienced.<sup>16</sup>
- **39%** of care leavers aged 19-21 were NEET\* compared to 12% of all 19-21 year olds.<sup>17</sup>
- **26%** of 19 and 20-year olds continue to live with their former foster carers through 'Staying Put' despite ceasing to be looked after on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, a marginal increase on 2017.<sup>18</sup>

\*(not in education, training or employment)



## Scotland: Executive Summary

**Please note:** A child classified as 'looked after' in Scotland includes all children looked after by a local authority, including some who remain living at home with their parents. Scotland is unique in this compared to the other UK nations.

- There are around **11,000** looked after\* children.<sup>1</sup>
- Just under **14%** of all looked after\* children are cared for in residential settings.<sup>2</sup>

### Fostering

- Approximately **50%** of looked after\* children live with foster families.<sup>3</sup>
- **38%** of all looked after\* children live with kinship carers.<sup>4</sup>
- It is estimated that a further **550** more foster families are needed.<sup>5</sup>
- **5%** of all looked after children experience three or more placement changes every year.<sup>6</sup>

### Adoption

- Of children who cease to be looked after, around **7%** go on to be adopted.<sup>7</sup>
- **68%** of children who are adopted are under the age of five.<sup>8</sup>
- At 31 March 2019, there were **151** children and **125** adopters waiting to be matched on Scotland's Adoption Register.<sup>9</sup>

### Ethnicity of looked after children:

This is no longer collected as national data.

### Care leavers and care experienced young people

- **One third** of young offenders and almost **one third** of the adult prison population self-identify as care-experienced.<sup>10</sup>
- Only **16%** of school leavers who have been in care for the entirety of their final year have one qualification at Level 6 or better.<sup>11</sup>
- Between **30-50%** of the homeless population are care experienced.<sup>12</sup>
- **28%** of young people leave care without a formal 'pathway' plan for their next steps.<sup>13</sup>
- Of young people leaving care eligible for aftercare services, **38%** did not receive any.<sup>14</sup>

\*For the purposes of comparison with other UK nations, 'looked after' here refers to children looked after away from their home or parents.

## Wales: Executive Summary

- **6,400** children are classified as looked after, an increase of **8%** from the previous year.<sup>1</sup>
- **10%** of looked after children had three or more placements over the past year.<sup>2</sup>

### Fostering

- **74%** of looked after children are accommodated in foster care placements.<sup>3</sup>
- It is estimated that fostering services need to recruit a further **550** foster families.<sup>4</sup>

### Adoption

- **308** children were adopted in 2017-18 – an **7%** decrease on the previous year.<sup>5</sup>
- **8%** of children were adopted by their former foster carer, a proportion that has fallen steadily over the past ten years.<sup>6</sup>
- As of 31 March 2018, **350** children subject to a placement order were waiting to be matched with a family.<sup>7</sup>

### Reason for becoming looked-after<sup>8</sup>:

<b>64%</b>	Abuse or neglect
<b>24%</b>	Family in acute stress or dysfunction
<b>7%</b>	Parental illness, disability or absence
<b>4%</b>	Socially unacceptable behaviour
<b>2%</b>	Other

### Ethnicity of looked after children<sup>9</sup>:

<b>92%</b>	White
<b>3%</b>	Mixed Ethnicity
<b>2%</b>	Asian or Asian British
<b>1%</b>	Black or Black British
<b>1%</b>	Other

### Care leavers and care experienced young people

- **51%** of care leavers are in education, training or employment at 12 months after leaving care.<sup>10</sup>
- Between **20-30%** of the young homeless population are care experienced.<sup>11</sup>
- **23%** of children leaving care aged 16 or over have no formal qualifications, vocational or otherwise.<sup>12</sup>
- **25%** of adult prisoners are care experienced and 14% of young women leaving care are pregnant or already a Mother.<sup>13</sup>

## Northern Ireland: Executive Summary

- There are **3100** children classified as looked after, a **4%** increase on last year.<sup>1</sup>
- **5%** of looked after children live in residential care.<sup>2</sup>
- Just under **10%** of children have been Looked After for ten years or longer.<sup>3</sup>

### Fostering

- **79%** of looked after children are in foster placements.<sup>4</sup>
- It is estimated that **200** more foster families need to be recruited.<sup>5</sup>
- Around **two fifths** of children in foster care are in a kinship placement.<sup>6</sup>

### Adoption

- **11%** of those leaving care are adopted.<sup>7</sup>
- Children wait on average, **3 years 2 months** to be adopted.<sup>8</sup>
- **9%** of those leaving care go to live with their former foster carers via the 'Going the Extra Mile' (GEM) Scheme.<sup>9</sup>

### Ethnicity of looked after children<sup>10</sup>:

**94%** White

**6%** Other ethnicities including mixed race, Irish/Roma Travellers, Black, Chinese and Pakistani

### Care leavers and care experienced young people

- **33%** of children leaving care have no qualifications.<sup>11</sup>
- **26%** of care leavers aged 16-18 have 5 GCSEs (A\*-C) or higher, compared to **82%** of school leavers as a whole.<sup>12</sup>
- **1 in 4** care leavers aged 16-18 had a statement of special educational needs.<sup>13</sup>
- **39%** of care leavers aged 19 were NEET\*.<sup>14</sup>
- **12%** of all care leavers aged 19 were parents.<sup>15</sup>

*\*(not in education, employment or training)*

## Global: Executive Summary

### Orphanages

- There are between **2.7 and 8 million** children residing in orphanages globally.<sup>1, 2</sup>
- On average, **80%** of children living in orphanages have at least one living parent.<sup>3</sup>

*The following statistics are based on reports carried out in one location:*

- **1 in 3** children exiting residential care institutions becomes homeless.<sup>4</sup>
- **1 in 5** children exiting residential care institutions gains a criminal record.<sup>5</sup>
- **1 in 10** children exiting residential care institutions commits suicide.<sup>6</sup>
- In Australia, **36%** of Christian churches and **51%** of individual church attendees were found to support overseas residential care institutions.<sup>7, 8</sup>

### UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children)

- During 2017, **172,362** people arrived in Europe via sea: just under half were women and children.<sup>1</sup>
- **92%** of the **15,140** children who crossed the central Mediterranean between January and September 2017 were alone.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2017, Britain received just **3%** of all asylum applications in the EU.<sup>3</sup>

## References: Headline Statistics

**(1)** England **(32,050)** Children looked after in England (including adoption) 2017-18

Scotland **(4063)** Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2017-18

Northern Ireland **(848)** Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2017/18

Wales **(2162)** Children looked after by local authorities, 2017-18

**TOTAL = 39,123**

**(2)** Total is **95,856** based on published statistics for looked-after children:

England **(75,420)** Children looked after in England (including adoption) 2017-18

Scotland **(10,920)** Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2017-18

Wales **(6407)** Children looked after by local authorities, 2017-18

Northern Ireland **(3109)** Children's Social Care Statistics 2017/18

**(3)** Total average is **3%**. Total number of looked after children across UK in 2016-17 was 92,900. This year is 95,856.

**(4)** Fostering Statistics, *The Fostering Network*; <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/all-about-fostering/fostering-statistics> [Accessed April 2019]

**(5)** Fostering Statistics, *The Fostering Network* <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/all-about-fostering/fostering-statistics> [Accessed April 2019]

**(6)** Headline Measures and Business Intelligence, Q2 2018-19; ASGLB; <http://www.cvaa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ASGLB-Business-Intelligence-Quarter-2-2018-19.pdf> [Accessed April 2019]

**(7)** Table D1: Children looked after in England (including adoption) year ending 31 March 2018; Department for Education

**(8)** Children looked after in England (including adoption) 2017-18; Department for Education

**(9)** *Care Leavers: engaging for solutions* (2016) National Audit Office

## References: England

### Statistics based largely on publications up to 31 March 2018

**(1) – (6)** Children looked after in England (including adoption), year ending 31 March 2018; Department for Education

**(7)** Fostering Statistics; <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/all-about-fostering/fostering-statistics> [Accessed September 2018]

**(8) – (13)** Children looked after in England (including adoption), year ending 31 March 2018; Department for Education



- (14) *Care leavers' transition to adulthood* (2015) National Audit Office
- (15) *Increasing the Number of Care Leavers in 'Settled, Safe Accommodation* (2010) M. Stein and M. Morris
- (16) *Nations Apart? Experiences of single homeless people across Great Britain* (2014) P. Mackie and I. Thomas 2014, Crisis. [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/20608/crisis\\_nations\\_apart\\_2014.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/20608/crisis_nations_apart_2014.pdf)
- (17) (18) *Children looked after in England (including adoption), year ending 31 March 2018*; Department for Education

## References: Scotland

### Statistics based largely on publications up to 31 July 2018

- (1) - (4) *Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2017-18*; Scottish Government
- (5) *Fostering Statistics*; <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/all-about-fostering/fostering-statistics> [Accessed April 2019]
- (6) - (8) *Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2017-18*; Scottish Government
- (9) *Adoption Statistics and Annual Reports*; Scotland's Adoption Register; Available at: <http://www.scotlandsadoptionregister.org.uk/adoption-statistics-annual-reports/> [Accessed April 2019]
- (10) *Prisoner's Survey 2015 – Young People in Custody* (2016) Scottish Prison Service (SPS)
- (11) *Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2016/17* (Published June 2018) Scottish Government
- (12) *Statistics, Who Cares? Scotland* <https://www.whocarescotland.org/who-we-are/media-centre/statistics/> [Accessed April 2019]
- (13) (14) *Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2017-18*; Scottish Government

## References: Wales

### Statistics based largely on publications up to 31 March 2018

- (1) (2) (3) *Experimental Statistics: Children looked after by local authorities, 2017-18*; Welsh Government
- (4) *Fostering Statistics*; <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/all-about-fostering/fostering-statistics> [Accessed September 2018]
- (5) (6) *Experimental Statistics: Children looked after by local authorities, 2017-18*; Welsh Government
- (7) *Annual Report 2017-18*; National Adoption Service
- (8) *Experimental Statistics: Children looked after by local authorities, 2017-18*; Welsh Government
- (9) *Children looked after at 31 March 2017 by local authority and ethnicity*; Welsh Government [online]
- (10) *Quantitative social services performance measures – Children and Care Leavers (2017-18)* StatsWales
- (11) *Provision for Young Care Leavers at Risk of Homelessness* (2015) PPIW Report
- (12) *Children aged 16 and over ceasing to be looked after during year ending 31 March 2016 by local authority, qualifications and measure*; Welsh Government
- (13) *Care experienced children and young people* (2018) National Assembly for Wales, Public Accounts Committee

## References: Northern Ireland

### Statistics based largely on publications up to 31 March 2018

- (1) - (4)** Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2017/18; Department of Health
- (5)** Fostering Statistics; The Fostering Network <https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/all-about-fostering/fostering-statistics> [Accessed September 2018]
- (6) (7)** Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2017/18; Department of Health
- (8)** Children adopted from Care in Northern Ireland 2017-18; Department of Health
- (9) (10)** Children's Social Care Statistics for Northern Ireland 2017/18; Department of Health
- (11) - (15)** Northern Ireland Care Leavers 2016/17; Department of Health

## References: Global

### Orphanages

- (1)** Petrowski, Nicole; Cappa, Claudia and Gross, Peter. (2017). Estimating the Number of Children in Formal Alternative Care: Challenges and Results, *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 70, pp. 388–398.
- (2)** Pinheiro, P.S. (2006) *World Report on Violence against Children*. New York: United Nations Secretary-General's study on violence against children, p183.
- (3)** Csáky, C. (2009) *Keeping children out of harmful institutions: Why we should be investing in family-based care*. London: Save the Children, p5.
- (4) (5) (6)** Tobis, D. (2000) *Moving from Residential Institutions to Community-Based Social Services in Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, p.33.
- (7)** Hancock, N. and Pepper, M. (2017) *Local Church Support for Overseas Residential Care Facilities and the Charitable Status of Churches*. Sydney: NCLS Commissioned Report No. 2017.19. NCLS Research, ACCI p3.
- (8)** Pepper, M. and Hancock, N. (2017) *Church Attender Support of Overseas Residential Care Facilities for Children*. Sydney: NCLS Commissioned Report No. 2017.11. NCLS Research, ACCI p3.

### UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)

- (1)** Immigration Statistics, July to September 2017; Home Office
- (2)** *Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe Accompanied, Unaccompanied and Separated – Overview of Trends, January-September 2017* (2018) UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM
- (3)** Immigration Statistics, July to September 2017; Home Office